Depot Town Rag

Volume 13, Number 3 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

March 1990

Olmsted's 1913 Plan: 'The Normal School'

Jazz line-ups

Promotion proposal responses

Caboose opportunity

Last month's business

. . . and other strictly local stuff!

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

June promotions to mark the 'greening of Ypsilanti'

Frog Island Festival *jumps* from the river to the railroad track

Kermit the Frog will probably appear in many Depot Town shop windows - along with everything else that can carry the GREEN FROG theme - for the return of the Frog Island Festival for that huge three-day musical event which is held in the district's back yard June 21, 22, and 23.

Specials in shops and restaurants will draw hundreds from the Frog Island concerts between sets and before and after the Friday-through-Sunday event. Gas-filled green balloons will announce those businesses participating to anyone passing down Cross or River Streets, and the Festival program will be the June *Depot Town Rag* - expanded to more pages, the musical programs, and advertised specials for the weekend.

Signs will be placed at all major entries to Ypsilanti the week before, announcing "Frog Island Jazz" and "Depot Town."

Dave Siglin, director for The Ark, expects up to 5000 in attendance for each day's program and has encouraged the local committee to, "get the action into the streets this year!"

District businesses will be receiving information this month to begin planning for the June event and are already thinking about 'specials,' green themes and frog images for their displays. The promotions committee will create window signs, sidewalk sandwich boards and other amenties for the businesses which respond to the plan.

Start collecting *green s* for June's window!

Depot People: Jerry Tillman, of the J & R Trading Post

Above: Jerry Tillman shows an antique RCA Victor record to Steve Knight, of Ann Arbor.

Ten years ago, Jerry Tillman sold 'collectibles' at the Giant Flea Market on Michigan Avenue. When her display grew to eight booths, she knew it was time to expand. Soon after that she had a shop in downtown Ypsilanti and, two-and-a-half years ago, she opened her J&R Trading Post in Depot Town. All three locations operated simulataneously for a while and it kept this bubbly grandmother plenty busy.

Now she's condensed her collection to the Follett House at 21 East Cross to show her exotic wares: original 33, 45 & 78 records - hats - jewelry - old fashioned candy - Depression glass . . . and lots more. When it's hot, you'll find a freezer full of popsicles, too.

Tillman may be the only entrepreneur on the block with Depot Town T-shirts, hats, bags and aprons for sale.

Jerry and her neighbor, Brenda Knox of *Designs on You* at number 27, and busy planning a fashion show with many of the other shop owners on the block. Still in the planning stages, the event will feature clothing from 1890 to 1990, featuring the best from beauty salons, clothing shops, dress designers, furnishings and such sundry items found only in (where else?) Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town. They're still working on a name for the extravaganza — something like "Time Travels?" Stop in and give Jerry your ideas and the project will keep moving forward.

Dateline: DEPOT TOWN

Jazz great, **Juanita McCray**, has been added to the April 21 'Jazz Raiser' where progress continues on the master plan for the City-owned Freighthouse

Ike's Depot Barbershop sports the newest neon in the neighborhood. The green, white3, and blue-green beauty sets the color scheme for the June Frog Island theme!

BULLETIN:

District Merchants overwhelmingly supported a late-February **petition to keep tents out of Cross Street** for this year's August Heritage Festival. Steve Gross will take the local opinion to the Festival Policy Committee.

Responses to the January

Depot Town Promotions Proposal

circulated among district business

January's proposal for monthly events in the district received responses from a little less than half the businesses in the district:

•12 respondents favor the 1st choice: *Pay someone else to do the promoting of the district.*

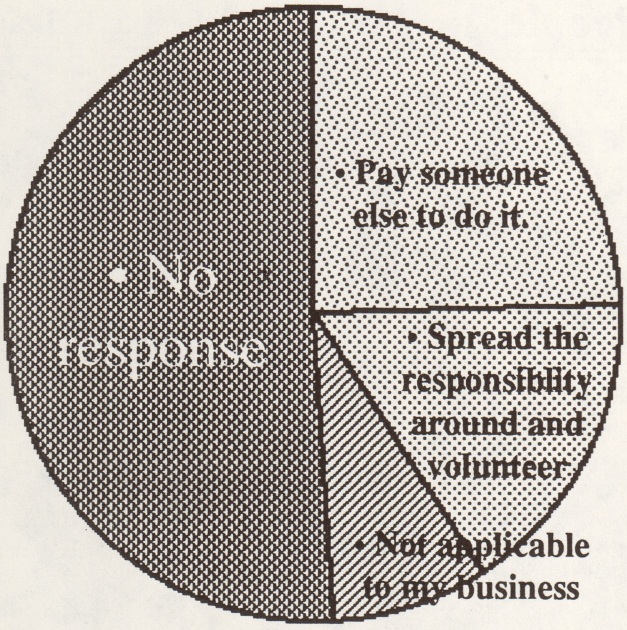
• 8 respondents favor the 2nd choice: *Spread the responsibility for sucy promtions around among the interested volunteers. I am willing to 'own' and help implement the following promotions. .*

(One of these checked which project they might 'own'

- All jazz concerts and competitions.)

(Another wrote in the following comment later on:

- I'm willing to run with the Heritage Jazz Competition.)



• 4 respondents indicated the 3rd choice: *Such a proposal is not applicable to my business or interest in the district, since I am independent of neighborhood promotions and would not be affected by a decline in tourism and street traffic in the district and, hence, should not be included in the benefits from the resulting advertising and promtion being considered in this proposal.*

• 25 of those polled did not respond and can be assumed to be in the third category.

NOTE: Several respondents checked more than one response. A few claimed they wanted to be in one section, but were unable to respond accordingly. They were then placed in the 3rd category.

• Many wrote thoughtful comments which are condensed in the following paragraphs:

- We prefer a combination of volunteering and paid promotions. Please keep us posted.
- I am not convinced that 'events' *per se* bring retail shoppers.
- I'm not even convinced that if an event is occurring that business will also occur.
- Maybe we are too specialized to attract the 'general' public.
- I suspect that there is not enough diversity in the marketplace. I suspect that my clientele would be propspective customers for other businesses in Depot Town, given a more interesting and/or unique mix of shops.
- I am certainly willing to do all I can to help 'turn things around' or improve our neighborhood life together . . . I'm just not sure how.
- A volunteer organization ourselves, extra volunteers though to help out, as we have in the past.
- We don't feel much benefit from some of the street traffic, although, it helps the area be a nicer, safer place.
- I think there should be a meeting of all the businesses to get some clarification and further information.
- I don't see how these activites would be that helpful in boosting . . .
- I would be more than happy to help, but . . .
- Scale back on the list, pick winners, take what we know will go and try others later after things get rolling.
- Pro-rated cost sounds good to us. . . possibly some volunteer work.
- . . . I do feel we should be known for one thing (Jazz) and be strong in this area before we spread ourselves too thin.
- Please be advised that we must work with some kind of budget.
- Maybe it will also become necessary to give up some of the events deemed as 'failures,' like Boomer Days & Victorian Christmas, to concentrate more on the thinning healthier ones.
- We in the stores hear all the complaints. It might be better to not have a particular event rather than keep clinging to a dead horse.
- I'm willing to pay my share if all merchants agree to do the same.

April 21, 1990

Heritage Competition Benefit

Depot Town Blues Fest

in the Freighthouse

- Juanita McCray
- Robert Penn
- Little Sonny & his Blues Revue
- OTIS CLAY and his Chicago R&B

$10 in advance

Ticketmaster, Sidetrack and Aubree's

$12 at the door

June 21, 22, 23, 1990

Frog Island Zydeco, Gospel Blues & Jazz

A huge district promotion will accompany this gala three-day event

Esquire Custom Drapery & Blinds

Custom Draperies
Vertical Blinds • 1" Blinds
Shutters • Shades
Wallpaper
Installation • Repairs

Ann Arbor 663-7011

Ypsilanti 482-6338

IN HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

10 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Clean sidewalks mark way for winter shoppers

Just as sparkling clean shopwindows draw customers inside our cheery businesses, so do carefully maintained sidewalks beckon our clientele to stay longer in this old shopping mall of ours. February's sleet and ice storm showed Depot Town's regulars that they are much appreciated and valued by the people down here who serve them.

Maybe the fact that school was closed for the winter weather emergencies had something to do with the quickly-cleaned surfaces in Our Town. High school-age kids showed up with shovels to help in many instances.

One memorable case saw a morning jogger slide by with heartfelt thanks: "Thanks for keeping your walks so clean," she said. "I really appreciate it."

And so do we. Maybe that's whey they keep coming back to Depot Town.

Office hours:

OPEN most days about 9 or 10
Occasionally as early as 7,
but some days as late as 12 or 1.
WE CLOSE about 5:30 or 6,
occasionally about 4 or 5,
but sometimes as late as 11 or 12.
SOME DAYS or afternoons
we aren't her at all,
and lately I've been here
just about all the time -
-except when I'm someplace else -
but I should be here then, too.

The above poster - which hangs in the back room of on of our neighborhood businesses - may only be kidding, but it reminds Depot Towners of the days when such policies were common on the block.

SIDETRACK
Good Food, Good Drinks, Good Times
56 East Cross Street
483-1053

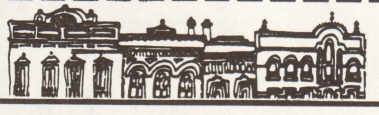
Red Rooster Pizza
. . . and Dairy Bar
37 East Cross • 483-4555

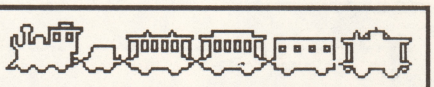
Aubree's Saloon & Second Floor
39 East Cross Street

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town
Every Wednesday and Saturday
all year 'round

KATRINA'S HAIR STUDIO

Featuring KATRINA'S COSMETICS
483-3644
Matrix-Paul Mitchell

MESSINA'S CHEESE
At the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market
Wed. or Sat. 483-1480 or 459-1995 any time.
March CHEESE SALE:
Cojack - $3.39 lb
Swedish Fontina - $4.39
NY White Cheddar - $3.69



All Aboard for the Sunday Best:
RAILROADIN' JAZZ EDITION
Broadcast live on
WEMU Ypsilanti 89.1 FM
from Apple Annie's
in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town
Sunday, March 11
10 am - 1 pm

Ike's Depot Barbershop
40 East Cross

THE OCCASION STATION
42 East Cross

42 East Cross
485-7546

Tech Style Junction
9 East Cross Street • 485-8807
Custom screen-printed wearables
• Air-brushed T-shirts
• Hand-lettered signs & license plates

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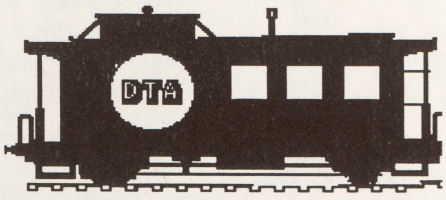
313·482-8373
15 E. CROSS STREET · YPSILANTI, MI. 48198
YOUR K12 CONNECTION
all materials for CLASSROOMS & CURRICULA

Local ads only $10 a month!

The Depot Town Association, Inc. February 15

Guests: Jerry Tillman, J&R Trading Post; Brenda Knox, Stitchin' Shop; Gary Urich, Freighthouse Manager; Steve Goldstein, The Ypsilanti Press.

Minutes of 18 January 1990 were reviewed and amended. In order to reach Gary McKeever regarding Caboose rental, the correct number to call is 482-4256. Apologies to the holder of last month's incorrectly noted number. Minutes were accepted as amended.



Treasurer's report: No figures available.

Standing Committees:

Budget & Events:

The Heritage Jazz Benefit is scheduled for April 22 at the Freighthouse. Tickets will be available through Ticketmaster, Aubree's and the Sidetrack. WEMU will include advertising flyers within their monthly program mailing and a co-sponsor will generously carry the benefit's liquor liability insurance. Now all we need is to hear from all of those great volunteers who want to be part of bringing jazz & blues back to Depot Town. Contact Tom Dodd (482-6371) to schedule a convenient shift and hear some great music, gratis.

Frog Island is tentatively scheduled to run June 21, 22, 23 featuring Zydeco, Cajun, Blues, Jazz, South African, and Gospel musical styles. While The Ark will take on more responsibility in running the musical events, the DTA will be supporting neighborhood involvement to take jazz to the streets.

The name game continues as Festival names currently registerd with the State by the DTA are being re-registered jointly by DTA and WEMU.

RAG: Current invoicing and collecting practices are having a positive effect upon the Rag's runing deficit. Requests have been recieved for monthly, quarterly, yearly, etc., invoicing. Rag accounts manager, Gary McKeever will provide personalized payment plans as requested.

The response to the Promotions questionnaire suggests that Depot Town is non-responsive (roughly 1/2 of those polled did not respond). Those who did respond supported the idea of paying for promotions narrowly over doing the work/fun themselves. DTA will be further discussing the possibility of giving Depot Town what it wants . . . and how.

Caboose: The Caboose is here for you to ren atjust $25 per evening. Contact Gary McKeever @482-4256.

Other Business:

Jerry Tillman and Brenda Knox presented an outline proposal to **produce an antique fashon show** featuring period clothing, music, and settngs. The DTA expressed support of the idea and of the opportunity to involve and promote area businesses. We hope to hear more soon.

Gary Urich presented an **update report on the Freighthouse Master Plan** in response to repeated requests by the DTA. Referring to the published Master Plan book available at Ypsilanti's City offices, Gary identified specific improvements which have been accomplished (interior screened partiction and deck reconstruction) and reviewed the status of those which are pending (construction of a west entrance). Discussion followed regarding which of the remaining improvements would likely be administered by the City directly and which would be managed by the Freighthouse board. The possibility of building and organizational expansion was noted as a long term goal.

Gary wished to go on record as being in **protest of the Rag's use of the word "abandonment'** in referring to the Freighthouse Master Plan.

Storefronts are changing as Tech-Style Junction is forced to move due to too much business and potential tenants are competing for 17-19 E. Cross.

DTA is considering the possibility of accepting Rag **advertising from businesses outside of Depot Town.** Decide at the March meeting.

The Depot Town DDA has petitioned the City to **add to the initial district.**

Now that the **recycling center has doubled in size,** it will be accepting high desity plastics (milk jugs, laudry detergent bottles, or SIM) and P.E.T. plastics (similar to soda bottles). Many are taking advantage of their new 'fast-trash' removal drive-thru layout as record traffic is being recorded.

DTA president, Paul Fetters, reported that the **Neighbohood Association of Michigan conference,** "Assessing Your Organizational Skills"," addressed the quality of potential, goals, leadership, and action within an organization. A noted and effective tool to use in assessing these qualities is the questioinnaire. Look out, Depot Town, you haven't heard the last from us yet.

Best Yet: Those who make the effort and take the time to recycle.

Golden Goose: All those who missed the boat and didn't vote.

March 1990

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Development Authority (DDA)
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 3/8
Freighthouse Coffeeshop

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 23/25
The Old Caboose

Antique Engine Club
7:00 p.m. Thursday, 3/22
Freighthouse Coffeeshop

Former resident writes:

". . . I'm working in Cambridge, and walk though Harvard Yard every other day or so. It's bustling but not as friendly as Depot Town. I miss you guys. We'll drop a note about the wedding date.

All the best, Eric Ward"

(Ward is a former Depot Town resident, DTA treasurer and DDA secretary. The architect's current address is:
52 Grove Street, Apt. 1,
Somerville, Massachusetts, 02144)

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

Depot Town Association, Inc.
Paul Fetters, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Active Memberships :
- Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
- Washtenaw Council for the Arts
- Neighborhood Associations of Michigan

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Business Cards • Letterhead • Brochures
Tickets • Weddings • Fax Service
Resumes • Posters

Ask about DISCOUNT on wedding orders

483-0339

35 E. Cross St.
In Historic Depot Town

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

Report Upon Proposed Improvements, forming a basis for a General City Plan

Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass. December 31, 1913

The State Normal College

(final in the series)

The Normal College, like many other educational institutions that thad an active growth during the latter half of the nineteenth century, presents a condition, physically and aesthetically, which it will be exceedingly difficult to bring into order and harmony. The present plan of the grounds and the character of the buildings is far from ideal: the architecture is heterogeneous and for the most part lacks the essential qualities of design. The general arrangement of the buildings and grounds, although presenting many interesting details, is very scrappy and ineffective in as a whole. It is possible to overcome this difficulty by adopting a plan which will prevent further continuation of such unsatisfactory results and which will direct the future growth of the Normal College toward the attainment of more ideal conditions.

The influence of the Normal College not only upon the City but through its graduates upon the whole State is so great that the kind of civilization which the buildings and grounds express and exemplify becomes a matter of deep concern. The qualities which should be expressed are logical and convenient order, systematic development, and the harmony and beauty which naturally follow. Such qualities can only be attained in the future by skillful and wise development in accordance with a systematic, harmonious and continuous policy, and in accordance with a definite general plan for the arrangement and the design of the buildings and for the layout of walks, drives and decorative planting.

The Normal College grounds should be extended now in advance of private development to include a sufficiently lare area to provide for future growth. Spaces for a large athletic field, for park planting, tree collections and a botanical garden should be reserved and adequate boundaries should be established while the land is still in large holdings. We first considered a possible extension of the grounds northward to Geddes Avenue with a wagon bridge over the Lake Shore Railroad tracks commanding views of the river and with a foot bridge over the Michigan Central Railroad tracks connecting directly with boat landings on the river shor. On further study, however, we are led to advise that Bowker Street b opened northward to the Peninsula bridge, that the West Boulevard be extended northward along or near the section line to Geddes Avenue, and that the College grounds be extended northward between these two streets to the bed of the small steam along wich we have proposed the Valley Park way. This extension includes about sixty acres of land now in large holdings. We would propose also that at least a portion of the land between the Valley Parkway and the Lake Shore Railroad be acquired. Bowker Street will form a direct connection from the College buildings to the river and to the boating park on the north shore of the river.

If these tracts of land are acquired, the present botanical garden should be moved east of the Power House and the entire western end should be developed as a big diversified athletic field; the area north of the Valley Parkway should be used as an arboretum; and the upland area near the present buldings shuld be reserved for a secondary campus and for future building site. We would propose that a local street be opened along the top of the bluff between the proposed botanical garden and the site reserved for buildings, and that another local street be opened just east of the Power House, passing between the athletic field and the botanical garden, and that a third local street be opened along or near the property line south of the athletic field.

In the proposed athletic field there is a natural amphitheatre which can be improved to form a horseshoe stadium and there is ample space for handball, tennis, and other outdoor sports. In the plan for the development of the field, provision should be made for a railway siding to be built from the Lake Shore tracks to the Power House. Such a siding could probably be carried across the proposed parkway on an overhead bridge.

While we are not in a position to say just what the future plan or policy of the Normal College should be, we have prepared a plan suggesting the general distributiion of the college interests and growth. Upon the plan we have shown a number of possible streets laid out in a way to divide the land into desirable units and fitting into the natural conditions as much as possible. This plan is not intended, however, as a final solution of the problem, but is presented merely as a graphic suggestion to show that some really bold and radical treatment is needed if the Normal College is to become a credit to the City and to the State.

(Above) Normal College group from corner of Brower Street and Forest Avenue, an attractive picture because of the masses of vegetation and the position of the tower, but showing upon careful esamination the ugly character of the design of the main building. - Olmsted

RAGTIME

YPSI FOOD COOP

Fresh produce every day!
Organic chicken, eggs and beef
Open to the public
7 days a week
312 North River Street
483-1520

All that JAZZ
is back!
Down in Depot Town:
Aubree's Saloon, April's Jazzraiser,
Frog Island Festival, The Heritage Competition.
Can the Winter Series be far behind?

Open 7 days
M-F 10-7
Sat 10-5
Sun 12-5
IMAGE PHOTO LAB
Michael Leach — 11 East Cross
Toni McCarthy — 482-3370

Olde Towne Coin & Gold
24 East Cross
483-6155

ANTIQUES
Something for Everyone
CROSS STREET ANTIQUES
33 East Cross Street
Antiques Bought & Sold
Hours: Tues - Sun 11-5
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Antiques and Stained Glass
412 North River • 483-3472
Buying & Selling of Estates and/or Single Items

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&
APPLE ANNIE'S VINTAGE CLOTHING
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We love to buy Antiques
DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E. Cross • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Nicetues
23 E. Cross Street
483-3637

BELL, BOOK & CANDLE
44 E. Cross St. • 487-1970

Hon's Flowers & Fancies
46 East Cross
482-2124

J & R TRADING POST
GENERAL STORE
Old, New and In-Between Things
MANY GIFT ITEMS - Old Records
The latest fashion in **HATS** for Men and Women
21 East Cross • 483-5870

TED'S Auto Electric
307 North River • 483-1238

City Radiator
100 North River 483-2248

Designs On You Stitchin' Shop
- Gowns for all occasions
- Custom Apparel
- Evening & Career Wear
- Alterations
- Patterns created

482-2010
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